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The Muse: Resources for Faculty and TA Newsletters, No. 6, Spring 1993

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The Muse

Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education

No. 6, Spring 1993

An essay on style

Somewhere between baseball caps and mortarboards

LeAne H. Rutherford

Styl—like taste—is subjective. That subjectivity makes it very difficult to lasso in words. Just when we throw our linguistic lariats over it, it slips loose of the noose and races away from capture.

Given the slippery nature of the beast, I think it wise to take two steps to corral the creature. First, I want to limit this discussion to the less mechanical aspects of style, staying instead in the range of tone, stance, and attitude.

As a newsletter editor, the facet of style that intrigues and bedevils me concerns those rhetorical things that make the sale of an educational idea possible—those rhetorical things that allow me to do my pedagogical peddling.

Secondly, analogies and description are more likely to help me wrestle with the definition of style than prescriptive language. Some things defy prescription because they go beyond it. Gestalt. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Style creates feelings, subliminal reactions. I can't tell you what I want, but I'll know it if I see it. There'll be chemistry. It's like . . .

It's like—style is like clothing. It dresses our ideas. We wear our

words. Picking style is like buying an outfit. Look at the next four verbal ensembles which deal with resigning from a search committee, and pick which one suits you.

- A. Even if I were to extricate myself from the consideration of the contaminated candidate alone, I would still be vulnerable to charges that I gave short shrift to competitors' offerings.
- B. The selection committee must be composed of persons free of alliance with any of the candidates. For that reason, my services on the team could be construed as a conflict of interest.
- C. Because I am related to the candidate, you can see the position of conflict I would be in if I were on the selection committee.
- D. Can't. Shouldn't be judge and advocate at the same time!

Which one did you like best? Can you think of any times when you might like one more than another? Were you looking at it from the standpoint of a reader or a writer? Under what circumstances would your choice be the best? What might purpose have to do with your selection? What kind of relationship between you and the reader is signalled by your choice?

So many questions affect the choice. Selecting style, like selecting clothing, is truly situational. That, in a nutshell, is the problem. Probably the tidiest definition of style appeared in an article by John S. Fielden in *The Harvard Business Review* (May/June, 1982): "Style is that choice of words, sentences, and paragraph format which by virtue of being appropriate to the situation and to the power positions of both writer and reader produces the desired reaction and result."

Let's look at the situation for faculty development newsletters. First, I want to practice editorially what I profess instructionally: to model the behavior I am trying to foster. Students learn better when instructional style is friendly, comfortable, cooperative, personal, egalitarian, relaxed, and conversational.

In tailoring terms (notice I did not use the tempting word "sartorial") I see myself linguistically clothed in a warm-up outfit, not a three-piece suit. My writing will have an elastic waist band—a loose fit, a conversational style—in the best sense.

See ☐ **Style**, page 2

ENCLOSED

- **TIPS**, Seneca College's faculty newsletter
- **Commentary** by editor Katharine Janzen

□ *Style (from page 1)*

Let's look at another aspect of the situation. We're dealing with newsletters, short publications. Size is a powerful tyrant yet a benevolent dictator. It forces me to use a vigorous style: more verbs than nouns; active, rather than passive voice. It forces me to eliminate unnecessary words and to use contractions and shorter sentences. It forces me to be conscious of what Richard Lanham calls the "lard factor," which makes most of what we write at least 50% too long. Size, then, keeps me succinct.

So far the situation calls for a natural/conversational but brisk style. But it can't be that easy. Where's the tiger? Trouble is in the power positions. Rank and respect are double trouble. If I don't accord faculty their due in the coin of their realm, I can't make my sale—peddle my pedagogy.

I do not want to be trapped in the trappings of academia: gowns, maces, mortarboards. Yet I know that some faculty foam at the mouth when students wear baseball caps in class. Somewhere between baseball caps and mortarboards lies the answer.

To further narrow the stylistic range, analyzing distribution helps. Formality often increases as rank and number of readers increase. The limited circulation of the newsletter I edit—1200 copies—helps keep the formality level down. The somewhat contained circulation allows me to be more familiar with my readers—using "I," "we," and "you" instead of always using the

third person.

My newsletter is "in house," homely, domestic. I deliberately avoid using titles for faculty in by-lines, although I do use them in author notes if so requested. These intentional attempts at verbal egalitarianism have the same effect as loosening a tie.

My deliberate effort at conversational style is further abetted by people like Maryellen Weimer, Marilla Svinicki, Delivee Wright, Linc. Fisch, Karron Lewis, and Joyce Povlacs Lunde. They have set a precedent with their natural, clear, plain speech that allows the rest of us to follow and emulate. Moving into a casual style means moving out of the conventional. That's a little risky. It helps to have respected people lead the way.

Finally, having faculty own the newsletter by writing the bulk of its content themselves results in a diminished power differential. Collaboration is a strong equalizer.

What we do in the classroom is important enough. We do not have to puff it up in some artificial way. The days of hoopskirts and bustles are over. As an editor, I'm not ready for Madonna and Company, but I do know that acceptable style lies somewhere between baseball caps and mortarboards. Top hats need not apply.

LeAne Rutherford is Instructional Development Specialist at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and edits the newsletter *Instructional Development*, showcased in our Spring 1992 issue. She has just joined the *Muse* team as co-editor.

Editors' musings

Newsletters à la française

Americans know the French as clear thinkers (Descartes' *Je pense donc je suis*), yet great lovers. Impeccable French style has sold perfume (Coco Chanel), clothing (Yves St. Laurent), architecture (Washington, DC), food (*Napoléons*), and wine (*Mouton-Rothchild*). And it has revolutionized twentieth century literature (Flaubert's *mot juste*).

But are most of us aware of the heady mix of ingredients that places the French in the forefront of good taste? No, we're not speaking of champagne and caviar, but rather of two major concepts that apply to all things French.

From their mothers' knees through the *Ecole Normale*, French scholars are taught a reverence for *forme et fond*—that is, structure and content. When the two are in harmony, elegance, pleasure, and understanding result. When they are absent . . .

What does this have to do with publishing newsletters? Everything.

Looking back over the stack of newsletters we have collected over the years, we divided them into two stacks: *harmony* and *cacophony*. Happily, as the dates progressed, the second pile suffered arrested development, while the stack representing a harmonious arrangement of design and content grew.

Perhaps as we learn to think more clearly about teaching and learning, we are better able to communicate visually and conceptually. And, as we pay more attention to presentation, we are more wary of content.

So before you sit down to re-examine your old newsletter or create a new one, be sure to have a bottle of Bordeaux, a bit of *pâté de foie gras*, and a copy of *Madame Bovary* on hand, while the melody of a Chopin *Impromptu* floats in the air.

Laura Border

The Muse is published by the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education as a resource for editors of faculty and TA development newsletters. Comments and contributions are welcomed by the editors.

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Filings**More *Muse* news to use**• **Newsletter network additions**

In last fall's *Muse* we offered a starter set of editors who are willing to exchange newsletters with you. Here are three more:

Directions

Glynis Wilson Boulton
Red Deer College
Box 5005
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5H5

UCIDeaS Newsletter

Patrick L. Healey, Director
Instructional Development Services
HTC 902-U. of California
Irvine, CA 92717-3500

Teaching at Duquesne

Dorothy Frayer, Director
Center for Teaching Excellence
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, PA 15282

• **Reprint**

"Bridging the Gap: Faculty's Role in American Indian Education," written by senior student Michael Munnell, was the lead article in the Fall 1991 issue of *Instructional Development* at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Though directed to Munnell's own Ojibway culture, the article makes

recommendations that are broadly applicable to increasing awareness of all people from whom we are different. Examples:

Know us by our bearing, not our appearance. Speak to us of your assumptions; let us speak to you of ours. Don't blanket us with assumptions that are too large.

The article runs about 1400 words. For an accurate copy and attribution information, contact LeAne Rutherford, *Instructional Development*, University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN 55812, tel. (218) 726-6207.

*Excerpt***A Dozen Hints for Drowsy Proofreaders**

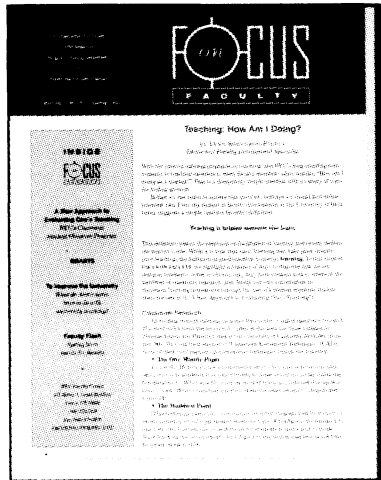
We asked some of EEI's proofreaders how they stay alert when proofreading boring material. They all suggested having a ready supply of hot coffee or tea and doing some physical activity, whether walking around the building or up a flight of stairs, or—if you are proofreading at home—doing a load of laundry. One exception was the proofreader who pointed out that she is often more alert to errors in boring copy than in material she finds interesting, because she begins to read the interesting material for content rather than for accuracy. Here are some no-doze hints for the rest of us.

1. Before you begin proofreading, look through the document quickly to check for (but not mark) inconsistencies and blatant format errors. This is easier to do when you are fresh, and it gives you a checklist of errors to look for as you proceed.
2. Approach the task with the idea that there *are* errors in the document and it's up to you to find them. If you think there are no errors, you quickly become bored.
3. Break the work up more by taking several short breaks instead of one or two long ones.
4. Refresh your eyes and your body by looking into the distance and stretching.
5. Talk to someone—anyone.
6. If you are proofreading at home, give in to temptation and take a 10-minute nap. (This hint works only for people who can catnap.)
7. Make sure the physical environment isn't contributing to your fatigue. If possible, raise a window to air out the room. The temperature should not be too warm, and your chair should be comfortable, but not so comfortable that you fall asleep.
8. Eat something while you proofread. (Two proofreaders suggested M&Ms; one rewards herself with an M&M every time she finds an error.)
9. To help you focus, turn the task into a game. With each new page, try to find at least three or four errors. Read the copy right to left to focus on individual words. Read the copy aloud for a few minutes. If you're really sleepy, try singing it!
10. Take notes while proofreading. Set up an alphabetical list of odd words or unusual terms or items. This trick helps keep the material interesting and helps you develop a style sheet to ensure consistency in the document.
11. Time yourself. The goal in proofreading is accuracy rather than speed, but timing how long it takes to complete a page or series of pages keeps you alert and lets you know how long it will take to finish the job.
12. Check to see just how many more pages of this stuff you have to plow through.

Excerpted with permission from *The Editorial Eye*, Linda B. Jorgensen (ed.), Alexandria, VA: Editorial Experts, Inc., March 1991, pp. 4-5. EEI's Connie Moy and Bob Wise contributed to this article.

Design Review

Boldness and restraint make BYU's new publication an instant winner



A two-and-a-half inch green banner that bleeds off the page. A stylized name reversing out of the green that artistically suggests a camera. A wide, screened contents box that teases you to look inside. This is reinforced by an off-center fold that reveals a nearly half-inch green border on page three. That's **boldness**.

This is FOCUS ON FACULTY, the fledgling newsletter for those who teach at Brigham Young University. It's published by the BYU Faculty Center, established just a year ago to cultivate a campus work environment full of professional competence, harmony, and personal nurturing, as well as to help colleagues come together to learn and to share their strengths.

FOCUS has boldness. Yet, look carefully. The headlines are no larger than 15-point. The sub-heads are 10-point. Rules at the top and bottom of interior pages don't even span the page fully. The footer and folio are subdued. Use of reverses, other than in the banner, is modest. That's **restraint**.

Boldness and restraint are in just the right balance to make this attractive and very readable news-

letter an instant winner, even with only two issues off the press.

Other things that caught our eyes include using the back page to feature short articles (less than 500 words) by faculty members on the topic "To improve the university," with that title set in reverse as a kicker to call attention to the column. Photos and sketches were employed in just the right amount and proportion to enhance copy and provide textual relief.

And the inserted Faculty Flash sheet of dates to remember works nicely in several ways. Its color contrasts against the page-three border to draw attention to itself. Separated from the main newsletter, the Flash can be taped over one's desk as a reminder. The format permits last-minute additions that would be hard to accommodate in the main pages of the newsletter.

Note also the metaphorical unity of the camera in the banner, the name FOCUS, and Flash. Neat.

All in all, FOCUS ON FACULTY is well done. The editor and Center staff have our congratulations.

Linc. Fisch

Pages: 4 or 6, plus insert

Stock: Halopaque white, satin finish, 70# (Flash: Indian ivory, sundance text, vellum finish, 60#)

Ink: Black and Pantone 341 (Green)

DTP program: QuarkXPress

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REFLECTIONS:

GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY, SENECA COLLEGE

by Eleanor Kirby Badger

This study attempted to elicit and examine student reflections in order to understand how they might be interpreted as guidelines for issues of attrition and retention, as well as undertaking an analysis of how students perceived their success.

Further, investigation of prioritizing and emphasis of response as regards attitudes towards retention and/or improvement of practices also served as a purpose in this study.

To facilitate the reflective process, 1,051 graduating students were first asked demographic questions which provided a current profile of the community college population. They were then asked a series of questions which attempted to measure their levels of satisfaction with their respective programs, faculty and with college services.

The students were also asked several questions which endeavoured to measure whether or not their expectations had been met. It was anticipated that, by determining individual students' expectations, it might be possible to examine college, program and faculty effectiveness.

While students hold idiosyncratic views, it was thought likely that com-

mon trends or factors might emerge which could account in part for their academic success.

Conversely, it was hoped that possible mitigating factors which might place that success in jeopardy might be identified so that any such elements could be circumvented in the future.

FACTORS EXAMINED

This study, therefore, sought to determine whether or not specific factors could be identified, isolated and examined as potential predictors of personal, social and organizational requisites for success.

The questions addressed in this study were twofold.

First, are graduate reflections able to be elicited in a critical way in order to understand aspects of the dropout rate? In other words, is it possible to understand failure by examining success?

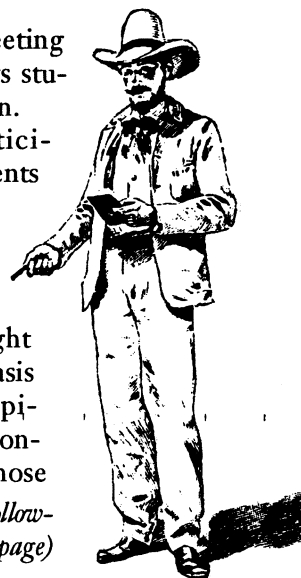
Second, should graduate reflections be used? If so, might they also be used to understand, from a different perspective, specific program strengths and weaknesses, and how might this understanding lead to meaningful program change?

It was also the intention of this study to examine to what extent Seneca

College is meeting the needs of its student population.

It was anticipated that students who responded very positively about their college experience might do so on the basis of singular episodes or relationships, while those

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who responded negatively might also do so on the basis of specific instances where they felt they had been treated unfairly. On balance, these issues appear to have been proportional in the findings.

The methodology used in this study was a combined qualitative/quantitative survey containing 35 questions related to how the college students viewed their experiences.

The survey was designed in consultation with a focus group which made recommendations pertaining to content, layout, design and implementation. The focus group was adamant about the need to distribute the survey during the final semester of student study, as opposed to a survey mailed after graduation.

FINDINGS APPEAR FOCUSED

Clearly, the sample size or rate of return of a mailed instrument would have been much smaller and the inclination of the participants to be completely candid might have been somewhat diminished after graduation. Also, the possibility of a halo effect from graduate reflections was far more likely over time. From that perspective, the findings of this study would appear to be sharply focused on those issues which the students felt were the most crucial.

The second reason for the chosen method and methodology had to do with the perception of the focus group that the college must be seen to be concerned about the opinions of its clients, in this case, the graduating classes of June 1990.

The classroom visits bore this perception out, and many students who took part in the survey made a point of welcoming the opportunity to provide input. Similarly, the faculty who provided access to their classrooms were highly supportive of the study and expressed a strong interest in having access to the findings upon its completion.

All participants, directly or indirectly involved with the study, under-

stood the intent and welcomed the opportunity to be involved. The Divisional Deans advised their respective personnel that the study was being conducted, while staff and faculty provided timetables, schedules and flexible access to the classrooms.

The students themselves, upon hearing the rationale for the survey and being provided with any necessary clarification of individual questions, participated vigorously. The length of responses to the open-ended questions indicates a conscientious attempt by the students to provide as much information as possible.

VOLUMES WERE SPOKEN IN A SERIES OF PARAGRAPHS WHICH DESCRIBED TENACITY, FRIENDSHIPS, HUMANISM, SADNESS, ANGER OR FRUSTRATION, HUMOUR AND ULTIMATELY, RITES OF PASSAGE, WHICH RESULTED IN ACHIEVEMENT.

Some were highly eloquent, and volumes were spoken in a series of paragraphs which described tenacity, friendships, humanism, sadness, anger or frustration, humour and ultimately, rites of passage, which resulted in achievement. Many students were the first in their families to attain a college diploma, and great pride was expressed by the students.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions which guided the methodology and methods in this study will structure this part of the summary.

Following the demographic questions, the students were asked whether or not their program of study had met their expectations. Seventy-six per cent of the respondents indicated that

they were satisfied with their program of study, while 23% were dissatisfied.

Next, the students were asked whether or not they felt that the teaching faculty were able to communicate, encouraging, fair, flexible and available when needed.

Notwithstanding the fact that this question, in retrospect, was far too complex, the results indicate that 83.6% surveyed were satisfied, while 16.4% were not.

The majority of the respondents suggested that there is evidence of a clear lack of teacher training within the institution. Without the opportunities for formalized classroom training, it appears that many faculty are being left to their own devices in this critical area.

Since adult students have unique learning styles and demands, it would seem prudent to afford professional development activities which would enhance both the faculty's teaching techniques and their overall approach to andragogical issues.

It is interesting to note that over 75% of the group surveyed held a job while attending Seneca College full time, working between 10 and 29 hours per week.

This data reflects the changing profile of the Seneca student and the need for the institution to react accordingly. Again, the open-ended comments indicate a clear lack of cohesive action to address such issues as hours of operation, timetabling, faculty availability, etc.

Further, while 72.5% of the graduate students surveyed stated that Seneca had met their expectations and 72.3% felt that their program prepared them for a career, the majority qualified their answers with additional comments which suggested that there were many areas of improvement needed.

Next, 78.7% of the sample felt that there was an appropriate balance of theory and practical experience, although comments indicate that

students felt that the practical experience had been the most useful and recommended increasing it.

A significant majority (87%) of graduates did not believe that their courses were too difficult, while 72.3% felt that their program had prepared them for a career.

BALANCE QUESTIONED

Only 62.1% of the students felt that their workload was balanced and manageable, and many recommended curriculum revisions to prevent some semesters being heavily overloaded while others were exceptionally light.

The question "What appealed to you the most?" produced interesting results, as did "What appealed to you the least?" in that faculty were cited in both. It would appear that faculty clearly had a significant impact on the respondents, both positive and negative. Again, the comments reflect the need for teacher training in the classroom. Eighty-three per cent of the respondents felt that Seneca was a good place to prepare for a career and 78.6% would recommend Seneca to a family member or to a friend.

Recommended improvements were heavily weighted in the areas of faculty training and curriculum revision, although it seems clear from the comments that the students are not questioning their teachers' grasp of content. Rather, it is the ability of the teacher to convey content that is constantly challenged.

The community college system in Ontario has never provided a formalized, structured training program for its faculty, and since most instructors are hired directly from industry, few have teaching certification. While this may not have been required when the colleges were first established, clearly the findings of this study would indicate that it is a serious shortfall in the eyes of the students.

It is possible that many faculty would welcome a professional development program that would assist

them in developing a variety of teaching strategies in the classroom in order to improve their effectiveness.

When asked if their experience at Seneca College had led to positive changes in their lives, 70.7% responded positively, and referenced career preparation, friendships, increased self-confidence and pride in having pursued higher education.

It is significant that 44.1% of the graduates surveyed seriously considered quitting their program at least once. While this may be, in part, a reflection of the faculty strike in 1989, the impact of that figure cannot be easily dismissed. Factors influencing the decision to remain included wanting the diploma, self-determination, family, friends, staff, faculty, and administration, as well as the end of the strike.

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Finally, the respondents advised future students to work hard, manage their time well, choose appropriate courses, and persevere because Seneca was a good college. On a more disquieting note, about 5% advised "don't go."

Aside from the reported findings, one major unanticipated outcome of this study is the actual experience of student reflection and the effect it seemed to have on all the participants — students, staff and faculty.

The process appeared to generate a certain degree of enthusiasm and excitement. Many students commented that they had never been asked for their opinion before and were pleased to have

been given the opportunity. Many recommended that the survey be implemented on an annual basis, so that the college could respond appropriately to its client base.

Staff and faculty were also highly supportive of the process and were most welcoming, both in the classroom and later on, in attending seminars which presented the findings of the study. Faculty have also echoed the belief that a similar survey should be implemented on an annual or bi-annual basis.

Further afield, there appears to be interest in developing a similar instrument from the other community colleges in Ontario. Since several colleges have already co-operated in developing an entry survey for incoming students, it seems to make good sense to consider an exit survey which might be useful to the system and to the students it serves.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings from this survey provide Seneca College with some specific recommendations from its clients — the students — pertaining to performance and recommendations for the future.

Bearing in mind that the findings are based on research conducted with students who succeeded in their programs, we may be able to not only develop predictors for student success, but also analyze in some detail what barriers exist which impede that success.

If the findings from the survey were taken and aligned with our current retention strategies, it may be possible to identify gaps which exist. The findings clearly demonstrate what needs to be improved upon, as well as what is done satisfactorily. That information should provide the underpinnings for the development of a variety of strategies which may encourage student success.

With some refinements, it is possible and advisable that surveys of this type be incorporated as an ongoing tool to measure performance by community colleges in Ontario. Clearly, both the instrument and the process could

(continued on page 9)

People in Profile

ERIKA GOTTLIEB

by Malca Litovitz
and Renee Scheremata

Erika Gottlieb was born in Budapest, Hungary. She received her doctorate in English literature at McGill University and is a member of the faculty in the School of English Studies at Seneca College. This interview was conducted on the occasion of the publication of her most recent book, *The Orwell Conundrum* (Carleton University Press Inc. 1992)

TIPS: Erika, what is your greatest love in teaching?

Erika: I enjoy introducing a work that seems difficult and then making the student realize that it is really very close to his or her own concerns. The classics in particular, of course. As Orwell says: "the best books are those that tell you what you know already". Striking that resonance in our students is very gratifying. And it never ceases to amaze me how they always respond to the right things.

Teachers of literature know that a good work appeals to everyone, but touches different things in everyone. Of course, living in a pragmatic age like ours, teaching students about literature is a special challenge. But I find that our students need and want the experience of discovering truths and values and seeing themselves and their world reflected in the mirror of literature.

TIPS: What do your students teach you?

Erika: This is an interesting question. Young teachers often feel that they know everything when they graduate. But when we begin teaching we discover that our values and our knowledge are easily challenged. I remember being upset by that when I started teaching. Now I especially enjoy being

questioned and challenged by my students.

When we are graduate students, we often mix with people who are exceptionally verbal and articulate. And we somehow come to expect that all people are like that. But being teachers, we constantly realize that before verbal skills become fully active, there is a state of passive knowledge.



ERIKA GOTTLIEB

In our students I often see this passive knowledge coupled with their enormous readiness to absorb and respond to more than they can express at the moment. Their language skills need to grow to express constantly developing thoughts.

Reading and responding to literature stretches their thinking and, therefore, their language. In fact, the language leaps I see students make during this process never cease to amaze me. We would not think of teaching swimming out of water; we cannot teach writing without an immersion into words and ideas. Unless we challenge ideas and insights, no language learning takes place.

TIPS: You recently paid a visit to your native Hungary where you taught at a university. How did the teaching situation compare to ours?

Erika: I taught both at the University and the Teacher Training College. Surprisingly, their concerns often parallel ours. There is a lack of funds; students are too busy with part-time jobs. Our concerns when teaching ESL — English as a second language — often parallel theirs in teaching EFL — English as a foreign language — even if English happens to be one of several foreign languages the Hungarian student is expected to acquire.

Of course, in Hungary, the trend is also toward pragmatism. In the past, culture and the arts used to be taught for their own sake, partly as an assertion of freedom. Now that freedom is there, so to speak, the framework for education is changing.

One hears students say "let's learn English so that we're prepared for Capitalism." If that means taking courses in English literature at the Teacher Training College or the English Faculty of the University, they will take these courses, but not necessarily because they want to become teachers of literature; they tend to accept the process in order to learn "practical" English. Teachers of Literature are poorly paid; people with a good command of English are paid well in business.

TIPS: What did you learn in Hungary about teaching that might be useful for our faculty here?

Erika: In Hungary, as in most Central European countries, there is a much greater respect for the educational process. They don't always succeed, but the respect is there on all sides.

Often they're more pedantic, making students' lives very painful. No doubt the results are impressive, but it seemed to me that in the training of, say, Grade Eight teachers, there was a tremendous emphasis on linguistics, theory, the machinery of grammar...

While we are on the subject of language teaching, their use of phonetics is extremely effective. I have often felt that for all the money we spend here on ESL, we should probably have more tapes... more language labs.

TIPS: *You have recently published a major work on George Orwell entitled The Orwell Conundrum. Has writing and researching the book taught you anything about yourself?*

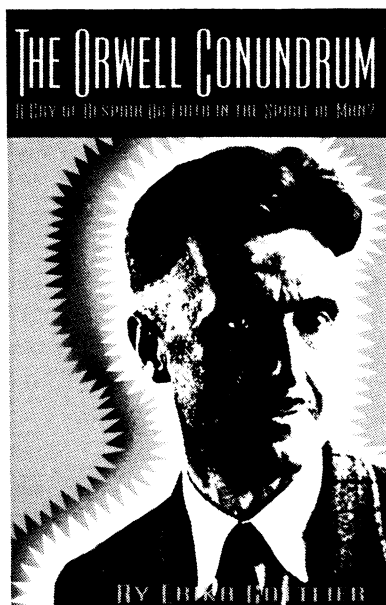
Erika: For one thing, it has taught me that it's a long and painful process to prepare a work for publication. You cut, edit, and rewrite entire sections. Then you cut, edit, and rewrite again. Probably more than anything else, the process teaches one the importance of tenacity, the need to stay on the job, even if it takes years. Applying for government publication grants entails submitting your work to referees, responding to their suggestions for changes, responding to their response, making changes, and so on....

TIPS: *Can one relate that to our students?*

Erika: Well, yes. Often some of our students feel that they can get credit for doing part of their coursework. They'll often fail a course because they didn't submit the last three assignments. They, too, have to learn that partial results are simply not good enough; they have to do all the work until the job is completed.

TIPS: *According to your book, Soviet Russia under Stalin's regime was one of Orwell's primary targets in 1984. How would you summarize his message to Western readers?*

Erika: Yes, the message is addressed to the Western reader, Orwell's contemporary. But, it seems to me, it is a particular type of reader Orwell has in



mind. He himself was a leftist intellectual. Still, as a satirist he chooses the average leftist intellectual as his adversary. You know, it's like a conflict in the family. One often has the strongest conflict with someone close to one's own position.

We should remember that Orwell wrote *1984* in 1948, a time after World War II, after the emergence of the Superpowers, when the majority of leftist intellectuals felt tremendously respectful of Stalin. They felt that it was Stalin's version of Socialism — the only version of Socialism in the world — that wielded the strongest weapon against the Nazi dictatorship in Germany.

At this time it took great courage for Orwell to state that it is simply a myth that Stalin's system is Socialist. In fact, Orwell argues that if the Western world falls for this myth, it has no hope of empowering democratic socialism — the only way, in Orwell's view, to prevent the further development of totalitarian tendencies in world politics. The majority of Orwell's leftist contemporaries took it for granted that Stalin's system was Socialist and hence the bulwark against totalitarian terror. In *1984* Orwell demonstrated that, regardless of its alleged ideology, Stalin's system was based on the method of totalitarian terror. His point was that to

condone or imitate such a system would be disastrous for the Western world.

TIPS: *So Orwell's target wasn't Soviet Russia?*

Erika: No. It was the Western intellectuals' view of Stalin's system. His interest lay in the West — in the mental attitude of Western intellectuals — not in Russia. Orwell felt that the intellectuals had an important role in society: it was their function to search for the right conclusions, to influence public opinion in a responsible way, and to guide society. In his essays, Orwell proved that each time the intellectuals allowed themselves to be misled, the Western world was headed for disaster.

Remember, too, that we have to see his position toward intellectuals from an English standpoint. In North America intellectuals aren't expected to be actively involved in politics. In fact, in the United States intellectuals often see their role as criticizing, regardless of who is in power.

In England, especially in the thirties and forties — a time of political crises, the rise of dictatorships, the rise of Superpowers — Orwell felt the intellectuals had a political role in society. But Orwell's definition of the intellectual's role is far from elitist. He assumes that those who've been trained to think carry responsibility in society, particularly at a time of crisis.

TIPS: *Have you always been interested in Orwell? Has your own background led you to him? What attracted you?*

Erika: I guess it's a combination of political vision and psychological realism that intrigued me. As a novel, *1984* has many dimensions, not just political. It is a successful combination, of several genres: parable, political thriller, Dystopian satire, love story, psychological novel — all at the same time.

Despite its success as a bestseller, *1984* has been very often misinterpreted by critics, and that got my interest more than anything. The book is complex despite its success. Too often a book

(continued on page 12)



Dear Dr. Kath

THE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES COLUMN

Dear Dr. Kath:

With the increased emphasis (post-Vision 2000) on the need to teach problem solving skills, I decided to change my lecture approach this past semester. I tried to increase student participation in class by asking them lots of questions. Unfortunately, I'm not sure it accomplished much other than that it slowed me down in my effort to cover the course material. At times it was really frustrating because the students seem to be reluctant to answer questions. Has there been any research on effective approaches in using questioning with college students?

Signed: "Leery of queries"

Dear "Leery of queries":

Your effort to engage your students in problem solving by asking questions in class is right on target! You are obviously well aware that learning the course content is no longer adequate preparation for students in the communication age in which we now live. With the rapidity of technological advancement and change, much of the knowledge and technical skills we teach today may well be out of date shortly after our students graduate. For this reason, it is essential that we help our students learn how they can formulate questions that will help them solve problems within the messiness of the real world. By asking your students appropriate questions, you are encouraging them to engage in thinking. You are also role modelling the thinking tools they will need lifelong. These questioning skills may well be the most useful thing you teach them in the long run.

There are many recommendations in the educational literature on how to formulate questions that encourage students to risk responding. Creating a teaching/learning environment that is supportive of students' self-esteem is one of these. This is particularly significant with the increased numbers of mature, life-experienced adults in our college classes (O'Brien & Whitmore, 1989). Orme (pp.28-37) has identified methods of probing that are effective in stimulating thinking. Blosser (1973) has identified questioning approaches based on the complexity and level of cognitive challenge.

In the study reported in this column, Duell, Lynch, Ellsworth and Moore examined a less understood variable, namely the impact of "wait-time"—that is, the length of time professors wait for students to respond to questions posed. These authors suggest that "many students are effectively shut out of responding and are not provided the opportunity to elaborate their answers, even those to complex, divergent questions" (p.483) because professors do not pause long enough.

Why not do some action research of your own by experimenting with increasing the wait time to see if this makes a difference with your students? Invite a trusted colleague to monitor your wait-time, then increase the time and observe the impact. Let us know the results and we will publish them in this column.

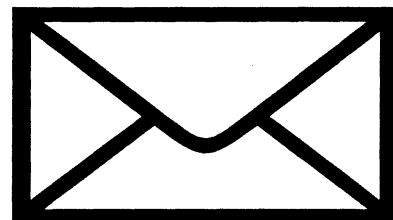
Signed: Dr. Kath.

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Orme, M. *Teaching Strategies Kit*. Toronto: Department of Applied Psychology, OISE.

O'Brien, M., & Whitmore, E., (Fall 1989). Empowering Mature Women Students in Higher Education. *McGill Journal of Education*. Vol. 24, No. 3. pp. 305-320.



Faculty are invited to write to "Dear Dr. Kath" (via the TIPS Mailbox, Newnham Campus) asking any question(s) related to research on educational issues.

All questions received will be answered directly; at least one question will be answered in each issue of TIPS.

A number of faculty have already agreed to assist in responding to questions received; if you would like to participate in this task, please let Katharine Janzen know (she can be contacted at Newnham Campus, extension 2080).

Each column will also summarize at least one recent research study relevant to higher education.

RESEARCH FINDING:

Wait-time in College Classes Taken by Education Majors

Investigator: Duell, O.K., Lynch, D.J., Ellsworth, R., and Moore, C.A.

REFERENCE SOURCE:

Research in Higher Education (1992) Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 483-495.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

This study sought to compare wait-times used by two groups of professors (those teaching education major students, and those teaching other college level courses) and to identify the impact of wait-time on student participation in class discussion.

ASSUMPTIONS:

The investigators' literature review identified that waiting three or more seconds for students to respond to the teacher's questions improved the level of student achievement and the quality of classroom discussion. It takes time for students to process information, store it in long-term memory, reflect on its relevance, and abstract meaning.

This is particularly true with higher order questions that require the synthesis and application of information to new situations. The researchers hypothesized that professors teaching education majors would be more aware of the importance of wait time in the teaching of higher level thinking skills, than would other professors, and would therefore allow students more time to respond to questions.

POPULATION/SAMPLE:

The study involved one group of 38 professors who taught required education courses and a second group of 38 professors randomly selected from general education courses. In total, 136 different required classes and 674 different general education classes at all levels of college programs were observed.

CONTEXT OF STUDY:

The study was done at a Midwestern urban, American university which enrolled just over 17,000 students. Of

these 6,700 were traditional students but the majority were not; the average age of students was 28, 33% were married, 52% worked full or part-time, and 53% were female.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Descriptive, comparative study.

METHODOLOGY:

The researchers asked permission to tape one of each professor's classes for an experiment examining the nature of class discussion. No indication was given that wait-time was the variable being explored. Of the 38 professors approached in each group, 29 education professors and 32 general education professors agreed to participate.

Data collected consisted of continuous audio taping of each sample class. Classes ran between 36 and 100 minutes in length. A student assistant member in each class started the tape recorder at the beginning of class and stopped it at the end.

A total of 3,456 minutes of class time involving 1,341 students and 61 professors was recorded. Oscillograph printouts of speech and silence on the recorded audio tapes were generated for analysis.

ANALYSIS:

The researchers encountered numerous problems in analyzing the printouts. Data for only 25 education professors and 29 general education professors were able to be included in the analysis.

The analysis was based on the number of questions asked per minute of class time and categorization of the type of questions asked.

Based on Blosser's model (i.e., level of cognitive challenge) four categories were used to classify the type of questions asked by the professors:

CATEGORIES:

1. **Cognitive memory** — simple recall of information.
2. **Convergent thinking** — associate, classify, reformulate, apply previously acquired information to the solution of a new or different problem.

3. **Divergent thinking** — give opinion, infer or imply based on provided information, predict.

4. **Evaluate thinking** — justify behaviour, take a position.

Two types of wait-time were examined:

- **Time I** — time between a professor's question and any student's response, and
- **Time II** — time between any student's response and when the teacher begins to speak again.

FINDINGS:

For the total group, the number of questions asked during a class ranged from 2 to 80; the average was 25 questions per hour, or .43 per minute of class time. Eighty-one per cent of 896 professor questions were higher level questions; 19% were low-level cognitive memory questions (p.491). Professors' wait-time I (which allows students time to formulate their answers) averaged 2.25 seconds (compared with 3 seconds recommended in the literature; one study found that, given unlimited time, students took 3.8 to 5.67 seconds to answer). The average for wait-time II (which gives students opportunity to elaborate) was only .45 seconds. There was no significant difference found between the two groups of professors in terms of wait-times or level of questions. But, students in education classes responded more frequently and gave longer answers to questions at all levels.

FURTHER DISCUSSION:

One study (Rowe, p.492) found if wait-time II was increased to 3 seconds or more, there was pronounced improvement in the students' use of language and logic. Lengthening wait-time I increased the number of times students responded to questions asked.

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Rowe, M.B. (1986) Wait time: Slowing down may be a way of speeding up! *Journal of Teacher Education* 37 (1): 43-50.

THREE COMMANDMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING

by Abava Newman

The Bible gives us ten commandments to follow. These ten precepts offer mankind a basis from which to live and progress. This article presents three new commandments. Adopting them will not transform you into a holy sage or a spiritual mentor. You may, however, learn to listen to the world around you with a bit more compassion.

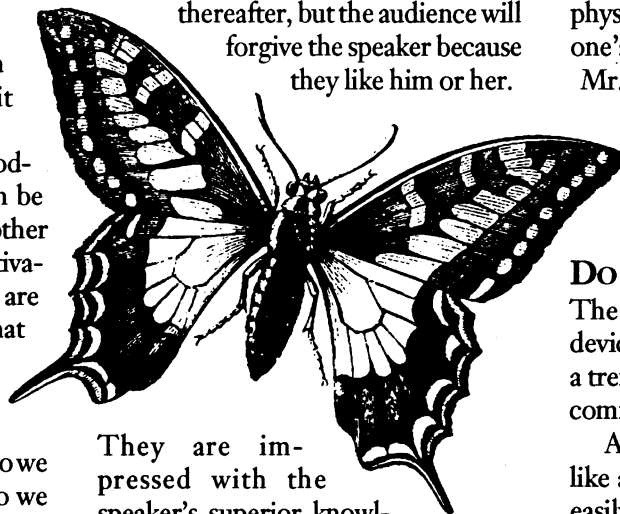
The ability to listen is not a God-given aptitude; it is a skill that can be improved and honed like any other skill. To achieve competence, motivation, patience and perseverance are essential. We constantly demand that our students attend to each pearl of wisdom we utter, hopefully scribbling furiously to attain a written record for future review. Do we offer them the same courtesy? Do we offer each other the same courtesy? Three recommendations — do not judge, do not daydream, and be humble — should be adopted cautiously, for as soon as it's evident you're a listener (a rare and dear commodity), you will undoubtedly be welcomed into any group, be it professional, political or social.

DO NOT JUDGE:

This maxim is almost impossible to accomplish. Human beings have an irresistible tendency to judge prematurely. We decide the significance of a book within pages, the value of a film from its trailer, and the merit of an argument within seconds.

There are so many factors that feed into this dangerous propensity: the voice and mannerisms of the speaker, general appearance, our emotional involvement in the subject matter, and our own opinions and prejudices. It is

a well known fact that a speaker can win or lose an audience during the first 30 seconds of a speech. The accomplished speaker who radiates confidence and self-assurance as he or she tells a humorous and appropriate anecdote can "hook" an audience quickly. The speaker can commit a variety of sins thereafter, but the audience will forgive the speaker because they like him or her.



They are impressed with the speaker's superior knowledge and intelligence, even though the speaker has, in fact, been judged prematurely and may have nothing worthwhile to say.

The opposite is equally true. The speaker who dives right into a complicated subject while adjusting a pair of glasses and reading a paper in a monotone will lose an audience. Some earth-shattering facts may be offered but the audience has already decided that the speaker is a bore. We are educators and role models who must develop the knack to understand first, evaluate second, and judge last.

Many years ago, in a small village, George Meister, a man infamous for his greed and lack of generosity died. Even during his funeral, the townspeople recalled the numerous rejections for donations and help for worthy causes. It was agreed that he barely deserved a decent burial. However, the following week a couple of interesting incidents

occurred. When Sammy the beggar and Yonah, his sidekick, went to the baker and the butcher for their weekly handout, they were informed it was no longer available.

The same held true for the other dozen or so homeless souls who depended on these gratuities for their physical sustenance. Much to everyone's surprise, it was then revealed that Mr. Meister had had a running account with the butcher and the baker for years. Whatever was requested was to be given; he would pay the total amount weekly.

DO NOT DAYDREAM:

The human mind is the most fantastic device ever created. Among its facets is a tremendous capacity for imagination commonly known as day dreaming.

At the peak of rush hour, crammed like a sardine in a subway car, you can easily transport your body for a lazy stroll along the beach. Everything we have read, everything we have seen, everything we have heard is stored somewhere in the depths of our mind, and for the purposes of daydreaming we can recall it in a split second. Daydreaming is necessary and valuable, productive and therapeutic, but uncontrolled it certainly hinders effective listening.

The problem is essentially caused by speech — thought speed differential. Speakers talk at a rate of 120 - 180 words per minute, while our minds process 500 - 800 words per minute. This means for every minute spent listening, we have a great deal of thinking time. We must utilize all our powers of concentration to avoid enjoying this 'leisure' time. When a speaker talks slowly or when we're preoccupied with ourselves, the problem is exacerbated. We must decide that what we want to do most is listen. It also helps to....

GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY

(continued from page 3)

BE HUMBLE

Good listening requires a certain amount of humility. In order to assimilate other people's thoughts and ideas, we must overcome the stigma that we somehow subjugate ourselves by listening. We seem to think that a person listening attentively is in some manner subordinate to the speaker. All of us who have been taught so much by our students can certainly verify the fact that teaching and learning is a two-way exchange that delights the educator.

There was once a group of young boys who played a game with their teacher, Mr. Gold. He could always guess whatever the boys hid in their hands. They loved this game, and would always delight in being unable to trick their mentor.

There was one boy who took the game seriously. Each day he would hunt for unusual and bizarre objects with which to test Mr. Gold's skill, and each day his disappointment grew greater.

Travelling to class one day this boy caught a butterfly. "Now I've got him!" he told his friends. "He will surely know that I hold a butterfly, but then I will ask him if it is alive or dead. If he replies it is alive, I will crush it in my fist. If he responds it is dead, I will set it free." Excitedly, the boy approached Mr. Gold, grinning. "What do I have, Sir?"

"A butterfly," he answered.

"Is it alive or dead, Sir?"

"That's up to you," was the teacher's reply.

And it is up to us. It's up to us to embrace humility and curtail day-dreaming and judgement.

Abava Newman is a professor in the English and Communications Division and a regular contributor to this publication.

provide the college system with an ongoing source of information and suggestions which might be of value.

The general findings indicate several issues worthy of attention, first as regards student services and issues of access. Second, and most importantly, the issue of teacher training seems to be a critical one from the perspective of the students who participated in this study.

Since they have successfully completed their respective programs of study and are responding as graduating students, it is possible that they are the most qualified to comment on this aspect of the community college system.

IMPLICATIONS

FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Every organization is comprised of members. In the community college, the largest membership is the student body.

As the client base of the college

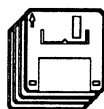
system, it makes sense to consult the students on a regular basis in order to obtain feedback pertaining to their opinions, impressions, and recommendations for the future.

In this decade, it is evident that many progressive organizations will seek to engage their respective memberships in dialogue which will include expressions of opinion and recommendations for the future. In this way, the membership has a say, indeed, a partnership in the organization.

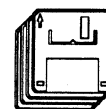
By inviting this kind of partnership, the organization can send a clear message back to its membership, not only that their opinions are valuable and that they are competent to provide opinion, but also that the organization itself is accountable for the success of its clients — in this case, the students.

This survey was part of Eleanor's work in the Brock Masters in Education program at Seneca.

A REMINDER TO AUTHORS:



SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS
(ONE DISK COPY, ONE HARD COPY,
AND ANY PHOTOS OR ILLUSTRATIONS)



FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF *TIPS*

BY SEPTEMBER 15, 1993

c/o *TIPS*,

NEWNHAM CAMPUS.

PLEASE INCLUDE A PHONE NUMBER

WHERE YOU MAY BE REACHED.



Charlene's Wellness Corner

CAN YOU SEE THIS?

A woman is lying on her bed. She is wearing an attractive yellow pullover and casual blue slacks. It is late afternoon. The door to her room is shut; the phone is off the hook; her eyes are closed. Yet she doesn't appear to be sleeping. Her breathing changes and deepens in a rhythmic pattern. She sighs and you become aware of soft, gentle music in the background.

If you put yourself in her place, in her body, you would experience a feeling of relaxation and calm as you let tension go. You would not necessarily know it, but your blood pressure, metabolic and heart rate would decrease. You would notice that as you became more relaxed, you would feel your muscles relax and let go. A feeling of pleasant well-being would start to flow into your awareness. If you went inside the woman's mind, you would notice pictures flickering across the screen of her mind.

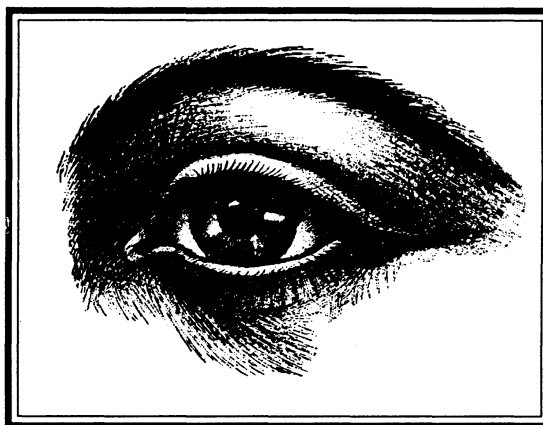
"Pictures in my mind?" you may say. "I'm the kind of person who doesn't see pictures." If so, try this: think of where you live. As soon as you think of your residence, a picture (or at least a felt sense) comes into your mind. How many windows does your living room have? Your kitchen? Once again, pictures will come into your mind, sometimes so briefly you think you didn't see anything. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we all visualize. It is a normal function.

WHY VISUALIZE?

Why was the woman visualizing? She was coming down with a cold, and she was strengthening her immune system by visualizing.

Scientific evidence now confirms that what we think about or imagine is linked to our nervous system. In

fact, a new specialty is emerging. It is called psychoneuroimmunology, the study of how thoughts and feelings (psycho) interact with your nervous



system (neuro) to promote healing (immunology).

Using a language of biochemicals and nerves, the mind and body communicate constantly. The mind plays an important role in protecting us from disease, or helping us to recover. Visualization or imagery is one way we can harness the power of our mind.

CELL COUNTS MEASURED

Jeanne Achterberg, an eminent pioneer and leading researcher/practitioner in the field of psychoneuroimmunology, showed that cell-specific mental imagery can effect neutrophil or lymphocyte cell counts.

Her subjects (30 of them) were randomly placed into two groups. Six weeks of training helped the subjects to visualize the location, movement and structure of either neutrophils or lymphocytes. Music was used to facilitate the visualization.

One group visualized changes in neutrophils; the other group visualized lymphocytes. White blood cell counts were measured before and after the final

imagery session. The result was a statistically significant change in the lymphocytes for the lymphocyte-visualizing group (but no change in their neutrophil levels).

And for the neutrophil group, neutrophil levels changed, but lymphocyte levels did not, once again at levels unlikely to result from chance.

The research is consistent with the view that measured immune system changes are cell-specific. It suggests that imagery or visualization influences immune functioning.

There are many other related studies. One important aspect of all this research is that visualization does not appear to harm. The other (more important) is that visualization very often appears to influence immune function in line with what has been visualized.

.....

The woman in the yellow pullover feels refreshed. She gets up from the bed with renewed energy. She and her recharged immune system are ready to face the world again.

For more extensive treatment of this subject, you may wish to read The Immune System Handbook by Charlene Day. For more information, contact the author at the number below.

Charlene Day is a well-known consultant, educator (teacher) and author of The Immune System Handbook. Her expertise in the areas of wellness, lifestyle counselling and stress management is the result of more than 20 years of study and practice. Charlene is a Master Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), a Registered Nutritional Consultant and holds a diploma in Social Work. She may be reached at 416-512-1168.

ARTISTIC LIFE REVIEW: HELPING LEARNERS LEARN ABOUT THEMSELVES

by Judith Anne Young

Artistic Life Review (ALR) combines principles of art therapy with therapeutic life review. This is not an art class, but a quick way to break the ice when a new group gets together and an excellent way to identify diverse background experiences. Participants may be asked to recall and record "significant life events" in the form of words, symbols or pictures on paper. Selected topics, such as body image (ideal body vs. real body), feelings about recent events (a reunion, hospitalization), or perceptions about specific concepts (such as motherhood) could be explored. Finished "products" are analyzed. ALR can be creatively applied to many teaching/learning situations.

LIFE REVIEW

Butler (1963) was the first to suggest that an informal taking stock of one's life was common in the well elderly, especially as death became imminent. Later, Butler described "life review" as a valuable process which could be undertaken at any age. Throughout life, we tend to reassess our actions, goals and accomplishments. What events were turning points? Have life's conflicts and concerns been dealt with satisfactorily. Can disappointments be put into perspective?

Reviewing life, periodically, is necessary in order to understand and accept present circumstances and to set realistic goals. Life review provides an opportunity to decide what to do with the time remaining. Either take further action or aim for a feeling of having done one's best. The ultimate goal of life review is self-acceptance.

ART THERAPY

Art is non-verbal expression of hopes,

dreams, fears, and feelings. Conflicts, problems and concerns become more tangible as they are worked through metaphorically in the art medium. Art provides opportunity to connect with inner feelings. Although language is the primary vehicle for thought, language is itself just sounds. Thinking actually takes place in a larger realm, a realm more accessible to non-verbal explorations. (Arnheim, 1969; Obernbreit, 1980).

USING ARTISTIC LIFE REVIEW

Choose a topic suitable for the group or individual you have in mind. You may choose general life review or ask your group to express feelings about a specific experience or point in time. The "time-line" technique works well for a small group of people who don't know each other and it is a quick way to get a life history from participants.

Give brief instructions to the group. Describe the topic and ask each member of the group to participate. Emphasize that no-one need reveal anything they do not wish to reveal. This is not an art class—any kind of sketch or doodle will do. If possible, have paper and several colours of pen, pencil, or crayon available. Set a time limit.

Once they begin, participants may appear very deeply engaged in the session. This "psychological work" may assist them to gain insight into their present lives and put past events into perspective.

When drawings are completed, group members are asked to discuss them. Although the content of the drawing is of interest, verbal sharing of personal meaning and interpretation of the work is most important. Allow time for discussion. You will be amazed by how much your group can learn about each other in such a short

period of time.

A number of "Picture Frames", (each representing three, five or 10 years, depending on the age group you are working with), can be used. Participants sketch a "meaningful" life event into each frame.

A "Life Line" is a life drawn on a long strip of paper, divided in half horizontally. The top half is considered positive space and the bottom half is considered negative space. Significant events from birth to present are selected from memory and sketched on the strip.

ALR techniques can be used with any group (whether newly formed or established). Discussion will provide insight into the (usually) diverse background of group members. Even when participants have shared experience (a class field trip, a reading assignment) their art products and discussion will often reveal varying perceptions.

Judith Anne Young has a Ph.D. and teaches in the nursing program at Seneca College.

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ERIKA GOTTLIEB

(continued from page 5)

that has so much written about it leads critics toward oversimplification and triteness. But that's another conundrum: in spite of its tremendous success as a bestseller, the book has also been the centre of extensive critical attention — of an entire "Orwell industry" in its busy title year. A true masterpiece, it is complex and widely accessible at the same time.

You know, a case in point is the way students respond to it. I have been teaching *1984* in my course on Utopia and Dystopia for nearly twenty years, and have been reading it with students from all over the world. I found none of the students ever fail to have sympathy for the right things: the values of individuality, Winston's courage, the bond between Winston and Julia, between Winston and his mother, Winston's concern for the truth of history, his heroic struggle to carry on the memory of the best in our civilization, his struggle to bear witness to the Truth in the maze of doublethink.

TIPS: *What was Orwell's attitude toward religion? Toward spirituality?*

Erika: Orwell was a deeply spiritual man — a seeker. But he wasn't religious. He was a staunch anti-Catholic. In fact, in *1984* he uses the Church as a synonym for the Inquisition, for mental tyranny. He didn't believe in organized religion. Although, to the shock of his friends, at the end of his life he asked to be buried according to the Anglican tradition.

Still, I think it's more to the point when one of his critics describes him as a "secular saint". I feel that his true "religion" was the religion of humanity. In *1984*, Winston is a seeker; he is on a spiritual quest. He believes in the Word as the vital connection between our past, the best of the human heritage, and the promise of our futurity. At a certain point he is willing to sacrifice himself for this promise.

I believe it is this spiritual dimension

students respond to. Their sympathies are entirely with Winston. The problem is, there is never enough time in the course to teach *1984* because the novel functions on so many levels and so many concepts come together in the book. Our students come from all over the world, but there is something in *1984* that touches everyone deeply.

TIPS: *What has been the critical response to The Orwell Conundrum?*

Erika: Very interesting. Those who agree with the approach feel that the intellectual climate of Orwell's world needs to be addressed.

Orwell wasn't the only one among his contemporaries who diagnosed the disease of totalitarianism, and his alleged "despair" should be seen in this context. In the light of the works of writers like Huxley, Koestler, and also of Camus, Sartre, and Thomas Mann; of historians like Hannah Arendt; and of psychologists of the stature of Freud and Jung, Orwell's stance gains new illumination.

Another critic who agrees with my perspective finds that *The Orwell Conundrum* has a strong angle — namely that *1984* is not a cry of despair, but an affirmation of Orwell's faith in humanity. Finally, the most recent review has found my reading of *1984* a "celebration of humanism in the twentieth century", concluding that *The Orwell Conundrum* is "a book for the beginner as well as the scholar of twentieth century studies." As an Orwellian and a teacher of literature, it is the last of these comments that I find most gratifying.

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Malca Litovitz also teaches in the School of English Studies and is currently teaching a poetry course and a study of entrepreneurial themes in fiction.



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Seneca College
of Applied Arts & Technology



The Muse

Supplement

Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education

No. 6, Spring 1993

Editor's commentary

TIPS: How it came into being and where it is going

Katharine Janzen

In 1965, the Ontario government established a system of 23 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology distributed in communities across the province. These colleges are distinctly different from the junior and community colleges in the United States in that they were established initially as "alternatives" to university education, rather than as preparation for university studies.

Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology, the largest of these colleges, is situated in Metro Toronto, with classes taught in over a dozen locations. It provides post-secondary career and vocational education to more than 12,000 full-time students and nearly 90,000 part-time and adult training/retraining students. Some 700 faculty from a broad range of field specialties and professional disciplines teach full-time at our college; another 1,200 teach part-time in Continuing Education programs. The college offers a wide diversity of programs—business, technology, office administration, health sciences, and fashion design, among many others.

TIPS arose out of the activities of a group of six Seneca College faculty and one Dean, who began meeting regularly to

discuss ways and means of implementing strategies for facilitating faculty-helping-faculty initiatives. In the initial meeting the facilitating group agreed that the focus of its activities should be on innovation and enhancement of student learning; it should not be "problem" oriented.

One of the initiatives introduced at this time was a newsletter that would encourage faculty to share their innovative ideas and experiences in teaching and learning with others. We called this newsletter *TIPS* (for Teaching, Innovation, Participation and Sharing). The college agreed to provide funds on a trial basis to cover the printing costs for the first year.

Eva Ticktin, who initially proposed the newsletter idea, guided the publication of *TIPS* until 1992. Through the distribution and posting of flyers, faculty from across the college were invited to participate by submitting articles and input, to participate on the editorial board, and/or act as campus representatives to solicit faculty input. It was decided to distribute *TIPS* to all full-time faculty, all administrative staff and board members in the college via the college mail system.

See ☐ *TIPS*, Supplement, page 2

Enclosed with this issue of *The Muse* is a copy of *TIPS*, the newsletter published by the Editorial Committee of Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology. *TIPS* is an outstanding example of a newsletter that serves both to enhance faculty dialogue on teaching and to build a sense of community in a multi-campus college. We showcase it in *The Muse* because we think our readers will benefit from its exemplary design and quality. We asked Katharine Janzen, Editor of *TIPS*, to prepare the above commentary. Dr. Janzen is Professor of Nursing and Coordinator of Seneca's Centre for Teaching and Learning [Seneca College, 1750 Finch Avenue East, North York, Ontario M2J 2X5, tel. (416) 491-5050, ext. 2080].

□ **TIPS** (from Supplement, page 1)

The first issue of *TIPS* was printed in January 1990. It was followed by Volume 2 four months later. The response to both issues was very positive. Through the efforts of the Dean of Applied Arts, who was a member of the original facilitating group, funding was received to establish an editorial board and to hire a person part-time to put the newsletter together.

Political controversy arose when several seemingly harmless articles printed in the second volume of *TIPS* were perceived as attacking senior administration. This forced the editorial board to confront, discuss, and resolve several important issues, the resolution of which significantly impacted on the final characteristics of *TIPS*. This effort resulted in considerable discussion regarding the actual purpose of *TIPS* and the extent to which politically sensitive materials should be included.

At that time, the editorial board resolved the issue by establishing the following editorial policy (Vol. 3, December 1990):

TIPS is a regular publication of Seneca College Faculty and is designed to meet the need to improve teacher-to-teacher communication on issues related to the teaching-learning process. As a publication *TIPS* will:

1) Foster participation and sharing by faculty of ideas, concerns, opinions and experi-

ences regarding the teaching-learning process.

2) Provide an exchange of information about books, journals, professional development events and courses related to the teaching-learning process.

3) Provide a forum where faculty can learn what other faculty and departments at the College are involved in, such as sabbatical proposals which have been accepted, books published by faculty and research being undertaken by faculty.

4) Provide a medium where both faculty seeking assistance in the teaching process, or willing to help others, can be brought together.

5) Function as a clearing house for faculty who wish to meet with others to share teaching experiences.

6) Foster a research atmosphere in college instructional theory and practice.

7) Provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and opinions on educational matters of significant concern to college faculty.

From its first trial issue of three pages, *TIPS* has grown to a newsletter of 12 or 16 pages published

three times a year. We initiated our current banner and format with our fifth issue (Fall 1991). *TIPS* is produced by writer/graphics designer Peter Kenter under guidance of an eight-person editorial board.

The guest editorial column is intended to provide a broader window on the world of higher education. It provides an opportunity to provoke faculty to consider the broader issues. Seneca faculty are invited to submit articles that are visionary or thought provoking in some way—articles that will challenge us to examine teaching-learning from a variety of fresh perspectives.

Sharing ideas on collegial consulting, a principal reason for initiating *TIPS*, continues to be one focus of the newsletter. Several columns appear fairly regularly in *TIPS*. These include reviews of books and films, a research perspectives column ("Ask Dr. Kath"), and profiles of faculty members and programs.

Recently it has become evident that there exists in Ontario a need for an academic publication like *TIPS* to facilitate dialogue on issues relating to college education across this province. We are currently in the process of expanding *TIPS* into a larger publication called the *College Quarterly* that will go to all 23 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, as well as others particularly interested in college education issues.